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ABSTRACT

The packet is designed to be used as the basis for a brief inservice workshop to provide teachers with ideas, materials, and resources for remediating visual discrimination deficits and for teaching the alphabet. Included are a sample prescription form, an informal diagnostic instrument to assess visual discrimination skills, and suggestions for teacher-made materials and related activities which provide followup and reinforcement. (SBH)

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TEACHING THE ALPHABET

A-Z

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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST

UVWXYZ*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*ABCDEFGHIJKLM

*nopqrstuvwxyz*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz*abcdef*

TEACHING THE ALPHABET

THIS PACKET IS DESIGNED TO BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR A BRIEF INSERVICE WORKSHIP TO PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH IDEAS, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES FOR REMEDIATING VISUAL DISCRIMINATION DEFICITS AND FOR TEACHING THE ALPHABET. IN ADDITION, IT IS CONSTRUCTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT CAN BE USED BY AN INDIVIDUAL TEACHER WITHOUT PRIOR TRAINING.

A SAMPLE PRESCRIPTION FORM IS INCLUDED TO HELP THE TEACHER FOCUS IN ON A SPECIFIC DEFICIT WHICH MIGHT PREVENT A CHILD FROM LEARNING THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET. FURTHER, AN INFORMAL DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT WILL ASSESS VISUAL DISCRIMINATION SKILLS. THERE ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-MADE MATERIALS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES WHICH PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP AND REINFORCEMENT.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN HAS BEEN COLLECTED OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES: ARTICLES AND IDEAS SUBMITTED BY SPECIAL EDUCATORS WHICH THEY THEMSELVES ORIGINATED OR FOUND USEFUL....CLIPPED FROM VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS, HANDOUTS FROM UNIVERSITY COURSES AND CONSULTANTS, ETC.

WE REGRET THAT, DUE TO THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE IDEAS WERE COLLECTED, THE ORIGINAL AUTHORS ARE NOT ALWAYS CREDITED AS THIS INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO US.

FLRS/CROWN
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

SUMMER, 1975

SAMPLE PRESCRIPTION FORM

Name:_____ Birthdate:_____

DEFICITS:

LANGUAGE: Does not know alphabet; inability to visually discriminate letters.

MATH:

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL:

PHYSICAL/MOTOR:

PREVOCATIONAL:

OBJECTIVES:

After completion of activities in packet, students will correctly identify given letters of the alphabet ans will write and/or say them in sequence.

PRESCRIPTION/PROCEDURES:

Assess child's abilities and skills

Provide activities to develop visual discrimination skills as needed

Follow step-by-step procedures of the multi-sensory approach to teaching the alphabet.

Provide opportunity for follow-up and reinforcement activities and suggestions

VISUAL PERCEPTION
(THE KEY TO LEARNING THE ALPHABET)

The ability to learn and apply (identify, read and recall the symbols we call the alphabet) is basically a visual perceptual task.

VISUAL PERCEPTION DEFINITIONS

1. Acuity - ability to see and to differentiate meaningfully and accurately objects in one's visual field.
2. Coordination and Pursuit - ability to control continuous eye movement and develop ocular fixation.
3. Form Discrimination - ability to visually differientiate forms and symbols in one's environment.
4. Figure-Ground - ability to perceive objects in foreground and background and to separate them meaningfully.
5. Visual Memory - ability to recall accurately prior visual experiences.
6. Visual Motor Memory - ability to reproduce motor wise prior visual experiences.
7. Visual-Motor Fine Muscle Coordination - ability to coordinate fine muscle such as those required in eye-hand task.
8. Spatial-Form Manipulation - ability to move in space & manipulate three dimensional materials.
9. Visual-Motor Speed of Learning - ability to learn visual motor skills repetitive through experiences.
10. Visual-Motor Integration - ability to integrate total visual motor skills in complex problem solving.

TESTS OF VISUAL DISCRIMINATION

Tests of visual discrimination will aid the teacher in discovering the level at which to begin reading readiness with pupils, and will serve also to indicate what letters need to be taught.

The two sample tests may be duplicated and used by the teacher. The first test measures the child's ability to identify capital letters shown on a flash card; the second test measures the same ability with lower-case letters. Fresh copies of the same record blanks may be used for measuring children's ability to identify letters named by the teacher.

When the flash cards have been printed in black letters and about two inches high, they should be placed in the following order:

CAPTIALS: O X A B T C L R S P N F E H D

M K Z J Y W G Q U V.

LOWER-CASE: o x s c i p t m k z e w r j y f

n a h v u b d l g q.

The order of the letters as shown above is the approximate order of difficulty when beginning first graders are asked to tell the names of letters.

DIRECTIONS FOR GIVING THE TESTS

Each pupil is given a test form and a pencil. If he cannot write his name, the teacher will write it. Then the teacher will direct as follows:

> I am going to show you some letters. I will show you the first one and you are to find it in the first box right below your name. It will be right in that first row of letters. Here is the first one. (Show O). See if you can find this one. Put your finger on it. (Check to see that each child has found the right letter) Now draw a little circle around it.

(con't on following page)

Then present each of the other letters, always watching to see that the children are at the right place on their blanks. Since this is an "identification from memory" test, turn the card down after the pupils begin to hunt for the letter. Do not allow a second look.

The test for identifying lower-case letters is given in a similar manner. When each has been given, the results will enable the teacher to find answers to the following questions:

1. Which pupils have high discrimination of letters?

2. Which pupils have marked confusion of letters?

3. Which pupils are secure on capital letters, but weak on lower-case letters?

4. Which capital and lower-case letters need to be taught to each group of children?

VISUAL DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

1. WHAT IS MISSING: Six to nine children or objects are arranged in a row as the children watch. Children then cover their eyes while teacher removes one or two objects or children. A child is asked to tell who or what has been removed.

2. WHAT IS THIS SHAPE:
Teacher "draws in the air" a large outline of some object in the room. Children are asked to look around and guess what was outlined. Sometimes hints are needed. Teacher may also draw numbers, letters, and geometric shapes for the children to guess.

3. FIND A SHAPE LIKE THIS:
Teacher shows a cardboard circle form. A child is asked to touch everything in sight in the room that is the same shape. Use different shapes as the game progresses.

4. EACH IN ITS PLACE:
Teacher or child arranges three, four or five objects in a row, while rest of the group covers eyes. Children look at objects for several seconds, then one is called on to face the class (back to objects) and name objects in order.

5. HIDE AWAY: Using a brown paper bag, teacher goes around classroom, holding up objects then placing them in bag. One child is chosen to tell what is in the bag; another takes objects out. The rest of the class is involved as they are asked to give hints.

6. TOUCH FOUR PEOPLE:
Teacher goes around the room and touches four or five people. A child is asked to tell who was touched, giving names in correct order. Hints are given when necessary.

7. GET SOMETHING BIGGER:
Teacher places a very small object on a table. A number of children are called on, in turn, to get something bigger and place it on the table.
(Reverse the procedure for GET SOMETHING SMALLER.)

8. ONE FROM THE RING:
Have the children sig in a circle. Place a group

of different colored objects in the center. The children hide their eyes while one of them removes an object. The object is to tell which color has been removed.

9. "I SPY": The teacher describes an object without mentioning its name. The children look around the room until they locate the object which she described. The first one to identify the object has the next turn to describe something in the classroom.

There are several major areas of discrimination which can be developed by simple games which will be of great help in approaching readiness:

1. Ability to note similaritis in objects
   a. Size
   b. Color
   c. Shape
   d. Texture
   e. Material
2. Ability to note differences in detail in similar objects
3. Ability to note difference in orientation
4. Ability to match objects with pictures
5. Ability to match similar pictures
6. Ability to match catagories of objects and pictures
   a. Food
   b. Clothes
   c. Tools

VISUAL TASKS

Visual Discrimination

It is important to be able to match and discriminate words, letters, symbols and objects if a child is to be able to succeed in developing a sight vocabulary and recognizing words. When teaching a child to become discriminative begin by having him differentiate between "very different" objects, words or letters. Then proceed with things that are similar. For example: Begin with a ball and a box; then a ball and an orange. Discriminating between the latter two would be more difficult than the former two.

The teacher who has a pupil with visual discrimination problems will need to employ specific techniques to help him. Through these special techniques the child will develop strategies which are useful to him in learning to read and which are transferable to other situations.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?	HELPS:
Cannot see the likenesses or differences between objects, letters and words	Use basic shapes made of cardboard or some sturdy materials. Have child discriminate for many visual discrimination tasks. Use many textures and materials. Use alphabet lists or cards. Have child match letters in varied ways. Also match letters on worksheets. Match first letter with subsequent ones.
Finding the same size	Give easch child an object, such as a disk, stick or ball. Have other objects of the same shape, but of a variety of sizes. He is to choose objects with the same shape. Using many variations: Choose for same size. Choose for certain color. Choose for function or category.

(Visual Tasks con't)

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?	HELPS:
Finding differences	Show the children two objects of radically different sizes, and ask each one to point out the larger. Then show the children two more pairs, the difference in size between the objects in each pair becoming less with each pair. Some of the objects should vary only in height or in width or in depth, so that the child, with your help, csan learn to discriminate between differences in sizes when presented in each of tne dimensions. (Also use textures)

ALPHABET FORM IDENTIFICATION

by

MARIANNE D. McKINNEY

Children with educational, instructional, and moderate intellectual handicaps can learn to master the total alphabet if the teacher uses a multisensory, small-step approach. The daily instructional period is divided into four 15-minute periods, each of which provides multisensory experiences while stimulating task attention. One task is done alone with the teacher or in a small group. The remaining tasks are done independently by the student, thus allowing the teacher to work with others. An aide or helping student can assist the teacher and check the progress of independent activities.

Three letters are presented each week in alphabetical order in uppercase and lowercase pairs. This is the initial suggested pace, but it can be adjusted to meet each child's individual needs. In addition to the new letters introduced each week, the letters previously learned are included to provide review reinforcement as well as continuity. An alphabet chart should be in sight in the room, exposing only those letters being studied. If possible, a Language Master with the alphabet cards studied should be available to provide the student with reinforcement if the teacher is not available during independent study time.

Here is an outline of the procedure to follow during a week's activities using this approach:

MONDAY

1. The student observes the letters of the week written on the board as the teacher names them. He may hold the teacher's hand as she writes and repeats the names with her.

2. The child reproduces the letters by:

   a. Tracing over them on the board.
   b. Writing them below those written while repeating their names.

3. The student traces the letters in the air while saying them aloud.

4. The student types the letters in the given order and names them.

TUESDAY

1. The student receives the letters written on plain paper with a felt pen. He then traces over them with his finger, naming them as he traces.

2. He writes the given letters on plain paper while naming them.

3. He traces the letters on tissue paper or on individual laminated alphabet sheets while naming the letters.

4. The student traces a sample and then writes the letters on first-grade paper.

WEDNESDAY

1. The student traces sandpaper letters with his hand.

2. He forms the letters in a sandbox. (A small sandbox may be made from a shoe box lid and a small amount of sand.)

3. The student arranges felt or plastic pieces to make the letters in consecutive order.

4. The students play alphabetical hangman. The child is asked to make a previously studied letter. If he cannot do this, a section of the man is drawn.

THURSDAY

1. The student makes the letters out of clay. Then he arranges them in consecutive order and names them.

2. The student cuts letters out of magazines or newspapers and pastes them under the appropriate headings on a worksheet.

3. He places letter cards in matching letter pockets arranged in order on the wall.

4. The students play a game called "Alphabetical Relay." The first student writes a capital letter on the board. The next student writes the corresponding lowercase letter, or the following capital.

FRIDAY

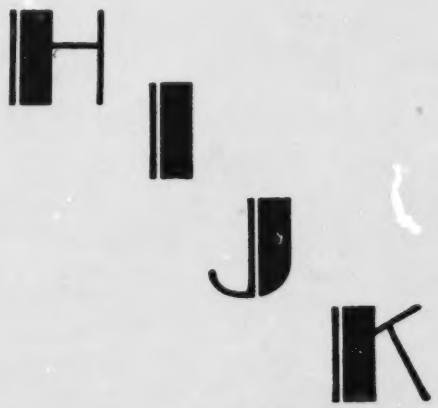
1. The student writes the letters in alphabetical order, trying not to refer to the chart.

2. The student fills missing letters in the alphabetical order list.

3. He matches the samll letters with capitals on a sheet of paper or on a puzzle where they are mixed.

4. The students sing the alphabet song up through the letters of that week while one child points to them on a chart.

This structured system has proven to be a successful method of teaching the alphabet. This approach has enabled students of varying ages and abilities to master the alphabet in eight weeks. Teachers may use parts of this method for spot remediation when a child has difficulty with a specific letter. If the teacher wants to, she can couple this method with additional elements and use it to develop vocabulary or to teach beginning phonics.



A MULTISENSORY APPROACH TO TEACHING THE ALPHABET

When Johnny comes to class, teachers try their best to teach him to read. They also try their best to teach him the 26 letters of the alphabet. He needs extra help, and an effective way is through a multisensory approach. The order of presenting the letters, the system of indroducing names, sounds, or a combination of sounds may be adapted to the following methods. I present these to help train a response which is correct and will be remembered. A teacher may use one method a day in the beginning, and more later, when possible.

TACTILE-KINESTHETIC

Give the child "snakes" of clay and help him follow the pattern you make, a circle and a line. He makes an a. He should run his finger around and down and at the same time say the letter. His attention span will determine how long he may continue with this activity.

With chalk, print the letter boldly on a cement sidewalk. Let the child walk it. Put an X where he starts and tiny arrows which show the direction. Put the letter on a line and have the child say it, as he follows the contour with his feet.

Trace with the forefinger of his writing hand a letter made with pipestem cleaners. (I use white pipestem letters glued onto black paper.) Fill the bottom of a cookie sheet with fine sand, and have the child write in it. For assistance, I draw a line, and upon it make the letter the pupil is learning. He writes his next to mine. I do not have him do it first, unless I am sure he knows it, for I do not want him to get the wrong feel of the letter.

Use a set of a-b-c's cut out of corregated paper and glued to cards. Have the child close his eyes, help him trace the letter; say it, and with eyes open, go around it again.

Make a feel box. Have large wooden or heavy cardboard letters inside. The pupil reaches in and identifies the letters without looking.

Write the letter on the child's back, forearm, or the back of the hand. Let him feel the shape of the letter as you say it.

AUDITORY

Use a colorful set of a-b-c's, with key pictures on front and a list of words on the back that start with the letter. To start, use only one sound of the letter. Example: use coat and cat, but not city. Discuss the words that start with the letter.

Riddle games are useful. "I am thinking of something you ride in that starts with a C."

A tape recorder may be used for poems or exercises from books, such as Listening Time, to reinforce the sound that the child is learning. Animals or animal sounds are helpful.

Records may be used that utilize a worksheet for each letter sound.

Say two, and then three words. The child raises his hand or responds, if they start alike. Then use endings and rhyming.

VISUAL

Have several wooden, magnetic, or flashcard letters in front of the child to select the one you ask for. If he needs a copy, furnish it until he is more secure.

Go to a set of a-b-c's (some are placed under the chalkboard for easier viewing) and ask the child to find an "a". Ask, "Is it near the front, middle, or end of the alphabet?"

With several letters, play Concentration. Provide two of each, face down. With a partner, pick them up one at a time. The aim is to remember what is seen so the cards can be matched and kept in pairs.

On worksheets, the child circles all the c's on the page (a selected letter) a copy of which is on top of the page. Each selected letter may be shown with a different color, etc.

When you write the letters, use the blackboard first. Polka-dot them first so the pupil has a guide and then just put an X where he starts. Use the same approach on paper. Use little arrows to help, if needed.

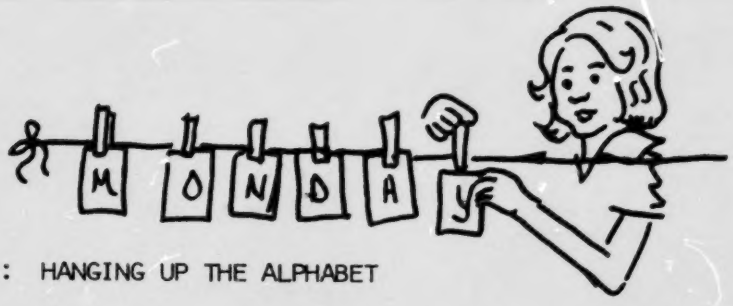
Make bingo cards with all the letters of the alphabet on them. X is in the middle, and "qu" are in one square to make the letters come out evenly. Make sure everyone covers a letter.

When you are doing the different steps, see with which modality each child learns faster and transfer this technique to words for reading. The children like the variety and seem to have fun as they learn their alphabet.

Most of the above are activities an aide or a mother helper can do and derive successful outcomes.

Elva Smith teaches at Antelope School, Red Bluff, California.

ACTIVITIES FOR REINFORCING ALPHABET SKILLS



TIX 45: HANGING UP THE ALPHABET

Doris S. Little is a teacher of trainable mentally retarded at Lincolnia School, Fairfax County, Virginia

Descriptors: Trainable Mentally Handicapped, Alphabets, Word Recognition, Language Development.

Many primary trainable mentally retarded children, do not know the letters of the alphabet. Often they are not aware that the letters properly put together will make words with which they are familiar. The following activity has been used successfully with trainable mentally retarded and 10 year old boys and girls.

Procedure: String a six foot clothesline in a convenient spot low enough to reach comfortably by all students. Write the word September on the chalkboard. Assign a student who knows some of the letters as the cheerleader. In typical highschool fashion the cheerleader calls out "Give me an S." The children respond enthusiastically, "S". Choose another student to go to a table and find an "S" which is printed on a card. If there is trouble finding the "S", help should be given immediately. The student then takes the card with the letter to the clothesline. Nearby are several pinch type clothespins. Help may be needed to operate the clothespins. The same routine is followed until the word September is hanging on the clothesline.

Other immediately volunteer for the cheerleader position and for pinning the letters on the clothesline. The letters come alive for them and they love it.

The teacher may choose words of high interest which are in the student vocabulary. While the purpose of the activity is to teach the alphabet, many useful words can be taught also. These include the months, days of the week, holidays, and the students names.

MATERIALS: Clothespins, clothesline, 3" x 5" cards with letters colorfully printed on them.

ALPHABETICAL SEQUENCE GAME

This fast-moving game strengthens reading skills while teaching alphabetical sequence to second-graders. To play, you'll need four boxes, each cut with five slits, numbered from 1-5. The slits are for holding cards and should be an equal distance apart on either of the wider sides of the box. Boxes which pencils come in are just the right size and work quite well. The 2" x 4" cards can be made out of tagboard. About 60 cards will be needed. On the cards, print in the upper left-hand corner known reading words beginning with varying first letters.

Four players make this game quick and exciting. One child deals five cards to each player. The player puts the first card he receives in slot 1, the next in slot 2 and so on until all five slots are filled. The remaining cards are put in the center so that each player can reach them.

The object of the game is to get the five cards in alphabetical sequence. The person to the left of the dealer begins the game by taking a card from the stack. If he wants to replace one of his original cards with that card he puts the original card in the discard pile. Or, if the new card is no help, he can put it in the discard pile instead. This is the only way he can rearrange the cards.

In order to get his cards in alphabetical order, the player may have to exchange all five cards, or if he's lucky, just one or two or even none. The hint to winning this game is to keep a large range of missing letters, between the cards.

---Helen Thomas, Seattle

ALPHABETIZING

by

HENRY B. CARY

For the poor readers, poor spellers, poor penmen, and for those who barely know the alphabet, I have devised the following simple exercise. I give each student a copy of the same publication (a newspaper, for example) and have them turn to a particular page and column. Having previously estimated the first 150 words of an article or advertisement, I ask the students to list the words in the narrative that begin with A, then all those that begin with B, etc. They list each word only once, even though it may appear several times in print.

The faster students who finish first can go on and alphabetize all the words within each letter group. The slower ones will do well to complete the first part of the assignment. All seem to enjoy the task, and some of the students pair off to compete with each other. Each student, after completing the list, almost automatically counts the number of words under each letter category. Most want to find the words they have omitted. A few will copy.

This game emphasizes to the students the necessity for legibility as well as spelling. The convenience of the game lies in the fact that advertisements or any narratives can serve as a source of words, as long as each student has his own copy. Capability and practice of the students will determine what length narrative should be used.

HENRY B. CARY teaches at Bellingham High School in Bellingham, Washington.